

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 MCT-02 SY-05 /060 W
-----043912 090059Z /23

O R 082221Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9339
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 6286

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: FRAUD CHARGES, BOMBINGS PUNCTUATE VOTE SCRUTINIES

REF: QUITO 6249

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE SEPT. 7 VOTE COUNTING SESSION BEGAN WITH RENEWED CHARGES OF FRAUD AND COUNTER-CHARGES OF CONSPIRACIES TO DERAIL THE RETORNO PROCESS, CONTINUED THROUGH A NOISY DEMONSTRATION, AND ENDED SEVERAL HOURS EARLY AFTER A BOMB EXPLODED OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE, WHERE THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (SET) MEETS. BOMBS ALSO EXPLODED DURING THE DAY AT THE HOME OF ONE AND STORE OF ANOTHER DP LEADER, WITH MINIMAL PROPERTY DAMAGE AND NO INJURIES. EMBASSY IS INCREASING SECURITY IN VIEW OF BOMBINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. AS PREDICTED IN REFTTEL, IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR THE NEXT "CRISIS" TO OCCUR IN THE SET. THE SEPT. 7 VOTE COUNTING SESSION BEGAN WITH A DECISION TO COUNT THE GUAYAQUIL
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RETURNS VOTE BY VOTE. THAT DECISION WAS TAKEN IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SEPT. 6 SESSION ENCOUNTERED CONTINUING ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF VOTERS ON THE LISTS AND ACTUAL VOTES AS REFLECTED IN THE VOTING DOCUMENTS. SET VICE-PRESIDENT RAFAEL ARIZAGA MADE A STRONG STATEMENT DEFENDING HIS RECENT DECLARATION THAT EARLIER IRREGULARITIES WERE ONLY A "PALLID REFLECTION"

OF WHAT WAS TO COME, SAYING THAT THESE NEW DISCREPANCIES HAD PROVED HIM CORRECT. CFP SPOKESMEN DID NOT RESPOND TO ARIZAGA'S STATEMENT, IN LINE WITH THEIR NEW STRATEGY OF NOT DOING ANYTHING WHICH WOULD SERVE TO USELESSLY DRAW OUT THE VOTE COUNT PROCESS.

3. THE SEPTAM 7 COUNT WAS DISRUPTED SOON AFTER IT BEGAN BY A NOISY CROWD GATHERED OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE, CHEERING JAIME ROLDOS AND BOOING THE SET. CFP REPS, AMONG OTHERS, WENT OUTSIDE AND CLAIMED TO HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE MOB DID NOT INCLUDE ANY CFP OR POPULAR DEMOCRACY (DP) MEMBERS BUT WAS COMPOSED OF PAID AGITATORS. NO SOONER WAS THIS INTERRUPTION RESOLVED THAN A SMALL BOMB EXPLODED OUTSIDE THE BUILDING CAUSING BORKEN WINDOWS BUT NO INJURIES. AT THAT POINT, ARIZAGA SUSPENDED THE SESSION ON THE GROUNDS OF LACK OF ADEQUATE SECURITY, ENDING THE COUNT FOR THE NIGHT AT 8 P.M.

4. HOWEVER, LATER THE SAME EVENING THE CFP ISSUED A WRITTEN COMMUNIQUE PROTESTING A PLOT TO TERMINATE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. THE COMMUNIQUE REFERRED TO CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE SET TO ENFORCE ITS THREE MINUTE LIMIT ON STATEMENTS BY PARTY REPS, TO PAID AGITATORS INTENDED TO BE MISTAKEN FOR CFP MEMBERS (SEE PARA. 3 ABOVE), AND TO CONTINUED, UNFOUNDED DENOUNCIATIONS OF FRAUD.

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5. TWO OTHER BOMBS WERE PLACED ON SEPT. 7 ONE AT THE HOME OF DP DIRECTOR JULIO CESAR TRUJILLO AND THE OTHER AT A GUAYAQUIL STORE OWNED BY DP VICE-PRESIDENT JUAN PABLO MONCAGATTA. NEIGHER BOMB CAUSED PERSONAL INJURY. MONCAGATTA TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE SUSPECTED THE BOMBINGS WERE CONNECTED WITH A T.V. DEBATE THAT HE AND TRUJILLO RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN ALONG WITH GUAYAQUIL INDUSTRIALIST LEON FEBRES-CORDERO. FEBRES-CORDERO'S HOUSE HAD BEEN BOMBED THE WEEK BEFORE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 6286

6. COMMENT: CONTINUED DISRUPTIONS AT THE SET, A VOTE COUNT WHICH NOW PROMISES TO BE ETERNAL AND CONTINUED CHARGES OF FRAUD LEAVE THE ENTIRE RETORNO PROCESS IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY. THOSE SEEKING ITS DEMISE, BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE SET, ARE SPARING NO EFFORT TO CREATE A PRETEXT FOR THE GOE TO STEP IN AND END THE AGONY.

7. THE ONE BRIGHT SPOT IS THE CONTINUED PUBLICATION IN THE PRESS OF ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS SPELLING OUT CLEARLY THE AIMS OF THE CONSPIRACY AND THUS INSURING THAT THE PULIC UNDERSTANDS CLEARLY WHERE THE BLAME SHOULD BE PLACE. EX-FOREIGN MINISTER JULIO PRADO'S COMMENTARY IN EL TIEMPO ON SEPT. 8 CLEARLY DESCRIBED THE OPPOSING FORCES IN THIS STRUGGLE. HE CAME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THOSE PRESSING FOR MOVING AHEAD WITH RETORNO AND DESCRIBES IN DETAIL WHY ATTEMPTS TO RADICALLY CHANGE THE PROCESS AT THIS POINT WILL ONLY RESULT IN CONTINUATION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT. PRADO'S STAND IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING AND CARRIED ADDED SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE HE IS THE NOMINAL HEAD OF OTTO
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AROSEMENA'S PARTY, THE CID, AND AROSEMENA IS ASSUMED TO BE ONE OF THE MOVING FORCES BEHIND EFFORTS TO DERAIL THE PROCESS.

8. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE YET, BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE BOMBINGS AGAINST FEBRES-CORDERO, TRUJILLO, MONCAGATTA, AND THE SET WERE CARRIED OUT BY TERRORISTS IN THE EMPLOY OF THE POLICE, PERHAPS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM MINGOV GENERAL BOLIVAR JARRIN. THE OBJECT WOULD BE TO SOW MISTRUST AMONG THE POLITICIANS, PROVOKING THEM INTO WILD ACCUSATIONS WHICH WOULD SERVE TO DISCREDIT THEM AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

ROLDOS INTIMATED AS MUCH IN A T.V. INTERVIEW ON SEPT. 8.

9. ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT WHETHER THE SAME ELEMENTS WOULD
TAKE THE RISK OF ATTACKING EMBASSY INSTALLATIONS, IN
VIEW OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE CHARGES MADE AGAINST US IN
THE PAST FEW DAYS, WE HAVE INCREASED SECURITY.
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